CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for checking the spelling of words, comprising the steps of:

2   identifying an unfamiliar word;

3   generating at least one alternative spelling of the unfamiliar word to create a word

4   variant;

5   providing the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant to a search engine

6   configured to search for a frequency of use of the unfamiliar word and the at least one

7   word variant; and

8   presenting the results of the word search to the user.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of identifying an unfamiliar word

2   comprises determining whether a word is stored within a word database.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of presenting the user

2   with word suggestions based upon similarly spelled words located within the word

3   database.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one alternative spelling is

2   generated by an algorithm configured to replace letters of the unfamiliar word with

3   similarly sounding letters.

1   5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing the unfamiliar word

2   and the at least one word variant to a search engine comprises transmitting the unfamiliar

3   word and the at least one word variant to the search engine via a network from a remote

4   location.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the search engine comprises an Internet

2   search engine.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of presenting results to the user

2   comprises presenting an indication of the frequency with which the unfamiliar word and

3   the at least one word variant appear within a database.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, wherein the frequency is expressed in terms of

2   number of hits for the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant.

1   9.   The method of claim 7, wherein the frequency is expressed in terms of a

2   percentage.

1   10.   The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of permitting the user

2   to select the at least one word variant to replace the unfamiliar word after receiving the

3   frequency information.

1   11.   A system for checking the spelling of words, comprising:

2   means for identifying an unfamiliar word;

3   means for generating at least one alternative spelling of the unfamiliar word to

4   create a word variant;

5   means for providing the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant to a

6   search engine configured to search for a frequency of use of the unfamiliar word and the

7   at least one word variant; and

8   means for presenting the results of the word search to the user.

1   12.   The system of claim 11, further comprising means for presenting the user

2   with suggested words that have similar spellings to the unfamiliar word.

1   13.   The system of claim 11, wherein the means for generating at least one

2   alternative spelling comprise an algorithm configured to replace letters of the unfamiliar

3   word with similarly sounding letters.

14.   The system of claim 1, wherein the means for presenting results to the user comprise means for presenting an indication of the frequency with which the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant appear within a database.

15.   The system of claim 14, further comprising means for permitting the user to select the at least one word variant to replace the unfamiliar word after receiving the frequency information.

16.   A computer readable medium including a program for checking the spelling of words, comprising:

logic configured to identify an unfamiliar word;

logic configured to generate at least one alternative spelling of the unfamiliar word to create a word variant;

logic configured to provide the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant to a search engine configured to search for a frequency of use of the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant; and

logic configured to present the results of the word search to the user.

17.   The computer readable medium of claim 11, further comprising logic configured to present the user with suggested words that have similar spellings to the unfamiliar word.

1   18. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the logic configured

2 to generate at least one alternative spelling comprises an algorithm configured to replace

3 letters of the unfamiliar word with similarly sounding letters.

1   19. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the logic configured

2 to present results to the user comprises logic configured to present an indication of the

3 frequency with which the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant appear within

4 a database.

1   20. The computer readable medium of claim 19, further comprising logic

2 configured to permit the user to select the at least one word variant to replace the

3 unfamiliar word after receiving the frequency information.